

**2007 APPROVED**  
**WORK PLAN AND MEETING SCHEDULE**  
**for the**  
**WELFARE REFORM OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

**Membership**

The Welfare Reform Oversight Committee was created by Section 2-17-1 NMSA 1978 to examine the statutes, constitutional provisions and rules governing welfare reform in New Mexico; monitor and oversee the implementation of the New Mexico Works Act; review issues related to welfare reform, including job training programs and related contracts; oversee cash assistance, child care, transportation and other job-related services and other issues that arise because of the devolution of the federal welfare programs to the states; and make recommendations relating to the adoption of rules and legislation, if any are found to be necessary.

The committee is also charged with hearing about implementation of the New Mexico Works Act from the secretaries of human services; labor; children, youth and families; education; and health. Committee members are:

**Members**

Sen. Linda M. Lopez, Chair  
Rep. Luciano "Lucky" Varela, Vice Chair  
Sen. Sue Wilson Beffort  
Sen. Dianna J. Duran  
Sen. Clinton D. Harden, Jr.  
Rep. Antonio Lujan

Sen. Gerald Ortiz y Pino  
Sen. John Pinto  
Rep. Nick L. Salazar  
Rep. Jim R. Trujillo  
Rep. Shirley A. Tyler  
Rep. Gloria C. Vaughn

**Advisory Members**

Sen. Ben D. Altamirano  
Rep. Candy Spence Ezzell  
Rep. Daniel R. Foley  
Rep. Miguel P. Garcia

Rep. Larry A. Larrañaga  
Rep. Steven P. Neville  
Sen. John C. Ryan  
Rep. Edward C. Sandoval

**Work Plan**

The Legislative Council has requested that this committee ensure that welfare policies in place in New Mexico focus on sustained employment rather than one-time hiring and pay careful attention to implementation of programs organized under the new Workforce Solutions Department. In addition, the council has reaffirmed the committee's role in identifying and resolving problems, where possible, arising from barriers to employment. Such barriers include training, educational needs and a lack of transportation and child care, particularly in rural areas. The council has asked the committee to require a detailed action plan by the new Workforce Solutions Department to ensure that the department is able to meet its performance measures.

In order to meet these and its remaining statutory obligations such as monitoring job training programs and related contracts, oversight of cash assistance, child care, transportation

and other job-related services and issues related to federal welfare program changes, the committee proposes the following work plan:

Overall, the committee will make this a "results" year. It will ask presenters to evaluate program success and failure and will even ask whether welfare "reform" itself is a success.

In July, the committee proposes to examine the implementation of new workforce development programs in Las Vegas, New Mexico. Contractors for New Mexico Highlands University will be asked to appear and to testify before the committee. The committee will expect to be able to address these questions with the Workforce Solutions Department: to what extent will the department seek to reform or streamline local workforce boards, and will the Workforce Solutions Department and the Human Services Department join forces for job placement through one-stop outlets? In addition, the issue of rural transportation and alternatives for improving quality transportation for those in the field will be examined. Problems with substance abuse administrators and related issues of substance abuse as a barrier to work are also on the agenda.

In August, the committee will meet in Las Cruces and Alamogordo to tour facilities and meet with people involved with the state university's administration of workforce development programs in southern and central New Mexico. Because New Mexico State University has become the largest contractor for workforce development programs, the trip to its home town is particularly worthwhile. The new secretary of higher education will be invited to share his goals for adult basic education, English as a second language and other community college adult programs. The Public Education Department will be asked to address concerns for high school dropout rates.

At that same meeting, the secretary of the new Workforce Solutions Department will be requested to appear for a discussion of appropriate performance measures and details of her plans for the newly created department. The Human Services Department will be asked to give preliminary information on performance measures for work goals that both meet federal requirements and reflect the New Mexico Legislature's interest in long-term employment. The Human Services Department will then be asked to return at the end of the interim to report on short-term successes in measuring long-term employment. Finally, the committee will hear about teen pregnancy programs and immigration issues as they pertain to workforce development.

In September, the committee will focus on the barrier of domestic violence. It will also take the first of at least two looks at issues surrounding child care. The committee will visit a five-star child care facility for a look at what components are critical and, ideally, a discussion of costs and incentives for quality. In addition, the committee will hear about utility affordability and permanent state funding for the low income home energy assistance program and about agricultural sustainability and ways poor people can benefit from farmers' market programs.

In October, the committee will examine policy and statutory problems with increasing the number of daycare slots in quality facilities and proposals for more efficient delivery of child care services. The committee will also expect to hear from the Economic Development Department about the additional \$12 million in state funds for job training and from administrators and clients involved with individual development accounts. In addition, it will hear about transition services for children who were once in foster care; disqualifications or decertification for cash assistance by the Human Services Department; and compliance with a court order requiring notice to those whose benefits are about to cease.

In November, the committee will review performance measures from the Workforce Solutions, Human Services, Children, Youth and Families and Higher Education departments for improvements for adult education and recommend legislation.

### **2007 Meeting Schedule**

<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Location</u></b>
June 12	Santa Fe
July 5-6	Santa Fe
August 1-2	Las Cruces/Alamogordo
September 6-7	Santa Fe
October 9-10	Santa Fe
November 27-28	Santa Fe